

Iraq, on February 24 of 2007, 6 weeks after he married the love of his life, Tracy. The bullet went through the right side of his neck, hit a major artery, went through his spinal cord, and exited through his left shoulder blade. Staff Sergeant Keil instantly became a quadriplegic. Doctors informed Tracy that her husband would be on a ventilator for the rest of his life and would never move his arms or his legs. Staff Sergeant Keil eventually defied the odds and found himself off that ventilator and beginning a long journey of physical rehabilitation.

Around that same time, Tracy and her husband started exploring the possibilities of starting a family together—something that is a dream of so many young people in America today. Having children was all they could talk about once they adjusted to their new normal. With Staff Sergeant Keil's injuries preventing him from having children naturally, Tracy turned to the VA for assistance and began to explore her options for fertility treatments. Feeling defeated after being told the VA had no such programs in place for her in her situation, Tracy and Staff Sergeant Keil decided to pursue IVF through the private sector. While they were anxious to begin this chapter of their lives, they were confronted with the reality that TRICARE did not cover any of the costs related to Tracy's treatments because she did not have any fertility issues beyond her husband's injury. Left with no further options, the Keils decided this was important enough to them that they were willing to pay out-of-pocket to the tune of almost \$32,000 per round of treatment.

Thankfully, on November 9, 2010, just after their first round of IVF, Staff Sergeant Keil and Tracy welcomed their twins Matthew and Faith into the world—two beautiful children. Tracy told me—and these are her words:

The day we had our children, something changed in both of us. This is exactly what we had always wanted. Our dream had arrived. The VA, Congress, and the American people have said countless times that they want to do everything they can to support my husband or make him feel whole again, and this is your chance. Having a family is exactly what we needed to feel whole again. Please help us make these changes so that other families can share in this experience.

That is what Tracy said to me.

I have heard from these severely injured veterans, and while the details of their stories vary, the common thread that runs through all of them is that these veterans were unable to obtain the type of assistance they needed. Some have spent tens of thousands of dollars in the private sector, just as Tracy and her husband did, to get the advanced reproductive treatments they needed to start a family. Sadly, others have watched their marriages dissolve because of the stress of infertility in combination, of course, with the stresses of readjusting to life after a severe injury, which drove their relationships to a breaking point.

Any servicemember who sustains this type of serious injury deserves so much more. The bill I am here today trying to get passed will give the VA broad authority to offer advanced fertility treatments to the most severely wounded veterans, their spouses, or surrogates. It also gives the VA authority to determine how best to offer those benefits. It reverses this troubling barrier to care and will bring the VA in line with the military, which provides these services to this same group of servicemembers.

This is commonsense legislation. It should pass without delay. In fact, the New York Times recently ran an editorial on this bill, and it said:

In more than a decade of combat overseas, the military and the VA have continually had to adjust to the challenges of new traumas with new treatments, as with the epidemic of brain injuries and post-traumatic stress. Adapting the VA health system to better meet reproductive health needs should be part of that response. It is one compassionate way to fulfill the country's duty to our wounded veterans.

They also noted that even this Congress should be capable of a bipartisan agreement to pass it, and I couldn't agree more. I can't think of any reason why any Republican or Democrat won't join us today in getting this bill passed. This is about giving veterans, who have sacrificed absolutely everything, every option we have to help them fulfill a dream of simply starting a family. It says we are not turning our backs on the catastrophic reproductive wounds that have become a signature of these wars. It says to all of these brave men and women, who didn't ask questions when they were in harm's way, that we won't let politics get in the way of our commitment to them.

The VA has an obligation to care for the combat wounded, and that should include access to the care they need. Our women veterans deserve this, our male veterans deserve this, and our military and veteran families deserve this.

My understanding is that the objections have been removed, and we expect this bill to be passed tonight when we clear the bills as we end discussions. I thank all of my colleagues who have stepped up to make the reality of a family real to these men and women who have served us so well in combat, have come home with extremely serious wounds, and who—because this legislation hopefully will pass this body and hopefully we will get the House to pass it—will then have their dream of having a family become a reality.

I am very proud to have worked on this bill in a bipartisan way to move it out of our Veterans' Committee. My understanding is that we will be able to clear this bill tonight and move it along its way to the President for his signature and give hope to many men and women who served our country to have a family once again.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Colorado.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WIND ENERGY TAX CREDIT

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor once again to urge my colleagues to act on extending the production tax credit for wind, otherwise known as the PTC.

If we let the production tax credit, the PTC, expire in the next 18 days—we literally have 18 days before it does expire—that expiration has the potential to cost our economy thousands of good-paying middle-class jobs. We just can't let that happen. Tens of thousands of Americans who work in the wind industry are depending on us to extend this important tax credit and in doing so save jobs and encourage investment in more States, such as my State of Colorado and the State of the Presiding Officer, New Mexico. If we fail to extend the PTC, we risk jeopardizing not only our economic growth but also our capacity, our potential, our ability to continue leading the world in the development and use of clean energy technology.

I have come to the floor over 25 times to speak about this issue, and each time I do, I highlight a different State and what the PTC has done to encourage economic growth. Today I am really pleased to be able to speak about the great State of New Mexico, the State of the Presiding Officer; their wind resources rank 10th in the United States. New Mexico is an impressive example of how wind can be harnessed to create good-paying jobs, support local communities, and produce American-grown power.

I wish to speak specifically about various areas in New Mexico. New Mexico has eight counties with wind projects, as my colleagues can see from the map here. The largest one is the New Mexico Wind Energy Center. It straddles Quay County and DeBaca County, which is located in the eastern central part of the State, in this area here. This is a very impressive project, as the Presiding Officer knows since it is his home State. It opened in 2003. It runs 136 turbines and produces 200 megawatts of power. Located 170 miles south of Albuquerque, it produces enough electricity to power 95,000 New Mexico homes, which is almost half of all the homes powered by wind in the State. So this is an impressive project. The Presiding Officer has probably visited the site and knows firsthand.

In terms of jobs, wind projects employ 500 New Mexicans around the State, and these are really good-paying

jobs. We have seen all across the country that investment in wind power is really an investment in the middle class and support for what makes our country great, which is building our economy from the middle out. These jobs are found across the ledger, if you will, including operations, maintenance, construction, and manufacturing, as well as the many support sectors. Of course, we know that when we have a fundamental, core business such as this, it creates a ripple effect. There are a lot of other small businesses that take root.

New Mexico—and I don't have to tell the Presiding Officer, but I will tell him anyway—has two outstanding Senators, outstanding leaders, and they are Senator BINGAMAN and Senator TOM UDALL. Those two Senators have championed the renewable energy sector, and they understand the significance of the production tax credit.

I particularly wish to mention Senator BINGAMAN, who is the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He has continued to press the Congress on the need to extend the PTC. I know we are going to see a package come forward that will have other clean energy tax credits in it. I am a member of the Energy Committee as well. I have that great honor. I really want to tell all of us in the country that we are going to lose a renewable energy champion when Senator BINGAMAN retires in just a few weeks.

Let me turn back to the potential in New Mexico for wind energy development. As I understand it, to pass this means that if we fully develop the wind resource in New Mexico, we could provide nearly 75 times New Mexico's current electricity needs. That is an enormous number. It is why we need, by the way, a grid upgrade, because when New Mexico harvests all that wind, we are going to send that energy to places such as Tucson and Phoenix, probably into Texas, and maybe all the way to the west coast.

Let me turn back again to the need to extend this tax credit. If we do not extend it—again, we have just over 2 weeks to extend it—we risk not only losing jobs but the momentum we have developed toward achieving true energy security and economic growth.

Already, because of inaction in the Congress over this last year, we have seen Americans laid off in the wind energy industry. Clean energy plays a crucial role in creating new jobs and electricity production. We cannot risk losing more good-paying American jobs. Some studies suggest that if we let the PTC expire, we are going to lose half the wind energy industry, which would fall from 75,000 jobs to something on the order of 37,000 jobs. This is not acceptable.

We cannot let the production tax credit expire. We need to pass it as soon as possible. It is simple: The PTC equals jobs. We need to pass it as soon as possible.

Think about countries such as China and Germany. They are continuing to

expand their wind industries and renewable energy sectors. If we do not support our wind energy industry here and the wind manufacturing facilities, we are effectively offshoring and exporting those jobs. Our global competitors are not hesitating. They are encouraging wind power development, and they know the longer we fail to act, literally, the more wind they can steal from our sails.

So enough is enough. This is an American industry. It needs to continue to be an American industry. But we risk everything—literally everything—if we let the PTC lapse in 18 days. So let's focus on this made-in-America potential. Through it, we can obtain energy independence, we can ensure energy security, and we can keep jobs in New Mexico and Colorado and Minnesota and New York—every State in our great country. So let's not wait any longer. Let's continue to build this clean energy economy right here in the United States. Let's do it today. The PTC equals jobs. Let's pass it as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Minnesota.

THE FISCAL CLIFF

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to urge a fiscal compromise that will allow us to avoid negative and very real consequences of the approaching fiscal cliff. Every day that passes without a deal only increases uncertainty in the markets and puts the brakes on potential economic activity. Failure to bring the national debt under control threatens our country's future.

In the weeks following the election, the message was clear from the people of this country. They want the people in this Capitol, they want people in Washington to come together to find reasonable, balanced solutions to our Nation's problems.

We need to show the country we are serious about working together to address our fiscal challenges—reducing the cost of borrowing and strengthening our financial outlook. The sooner we can agree on a long-term, balanced deficit reduction package, the better for our economy and the better for our country. It is time to put political differences aside to work on an agenda that strengthens our economy, promotes fiscal responsibility, and increases global competitiveness.

I have always said that we need to make things in America, that we need to invent again, and that we need to export to the world. We are starting to do that again. I see it all over our State, where fortunately our unemployment rate is better than a lot of other States. It is about 5.8 percent, but we can do even better. One of the keys to doing better is not only focusing on exports, on education, it is also bringing down this debt in a balanced way, in a way that will not suddenly

jar our economy and put us over the edge but in a way that in the long term means businesses, the people of the world can look at it, the businesses can look at it and say: They are serious about this. They are doing this in a measured, balanced way, but they are going to get this done.

If we refuse to have an honest conversation, if we insist on using the debate only for a vehicle for political rhetoric, we will not just be doing ourselves a disservice, we will be cheating our children and grandchildren out of knowing the America we grew up in, the America in Minnesota, where one smalltown businessperson can start a business and grow and grow and grow and employ their kids and their grandkids, where a farmer can build a farm that employs people throughout the town, where someone in New Mexico can get an idea for wind energy or solar energy and start a new business. That is what this America is about.

In 2011 we came together and put in place discretionary spending caps that will reduce our debt by over \$1 trillion in the coming decade. We also agreed to find another \$1 trillion in savings before December 31 of this year.

While significant spending cuts are a necessary part of a balanced solution, any plan to responsibly lower the deficit cannot come from cuts alone. Revenue must also be part of the solution. I have appreciated that several of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have acknowledged this, that revenue must be part of the solution. Now we have to put words into action.

I think the most common refrain I hear from the business community at home when we discuss what it will take to spur investment and create jobs—what they talk about is certainty. They need certainty. They need certainty if they are a farmer. We need to include the farm bill in this package so they know what they need to get for their crop insurance. They need certainty if they are a businessperson and deciding whether they should invest in new equipment, and they need to know exactly what the tax consequences and other consequences of that investment will be.

So on the revenue side, in addition to the cuts I just discussed, what does that mean on the revenue side?

First, it means extending the tax cuts for middle-class America. In Minnesota, 2 million families and small businesses will see their Federal income taxes increase by an average of \$1,600 unless the middle-class tax cuts are extended. This means a lot for a family trying to decide whether they can afford a student loan to send their kid to college this fall or a business owner looking to invest in their company. It means a lot.

Second, this means returning to the Clinton tax levels for people making over \$250,000 a year. Let's go back to that time. Under those rates, the economy created nearly 23 million jobs. Small businesses generated jobs at